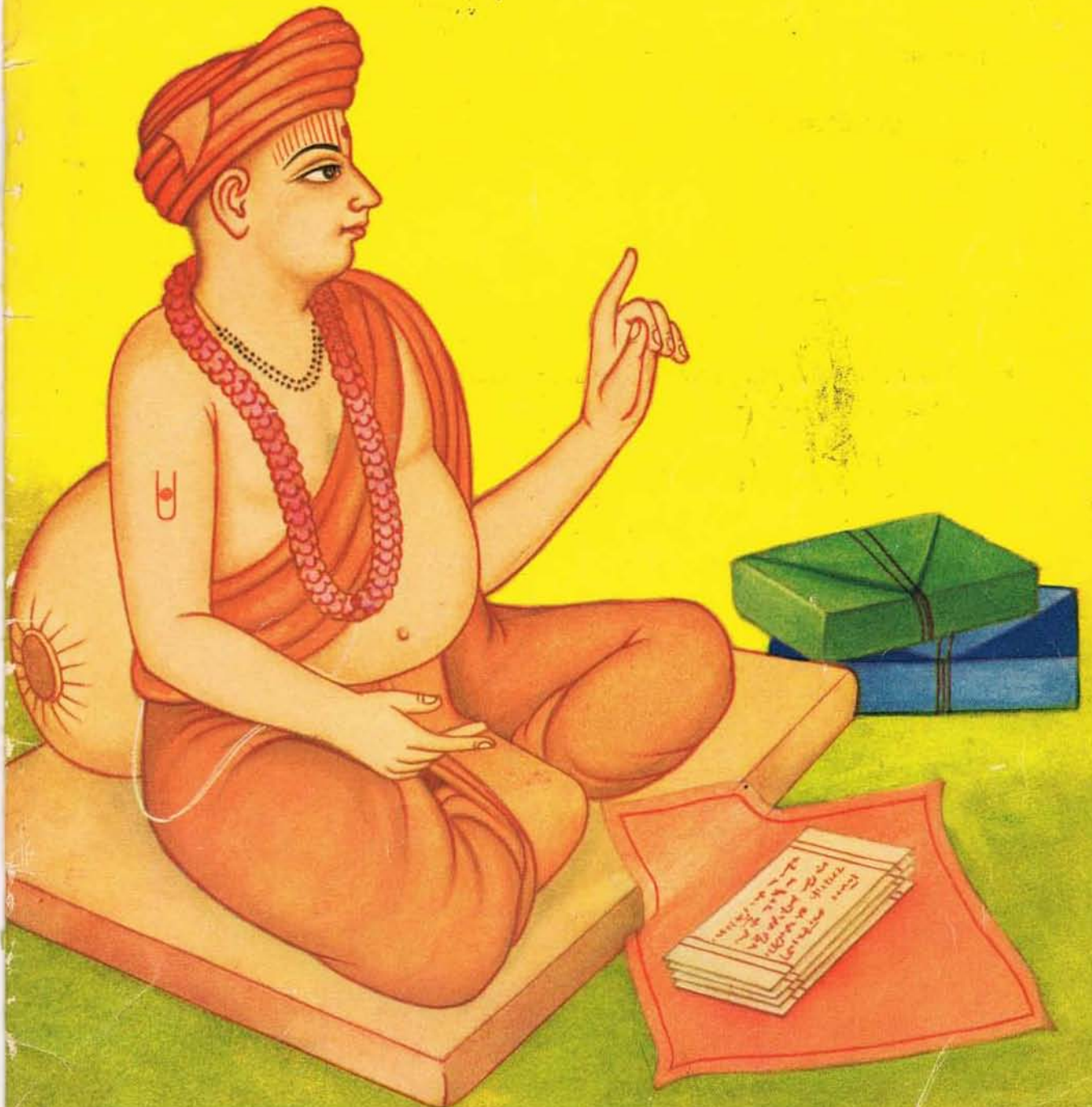


BRAHMANAND SWAMI



Written
by
Shantikumar Bhatt
Bombay.

Translated
by
K. K. Rangacharyaji
Vadtal.

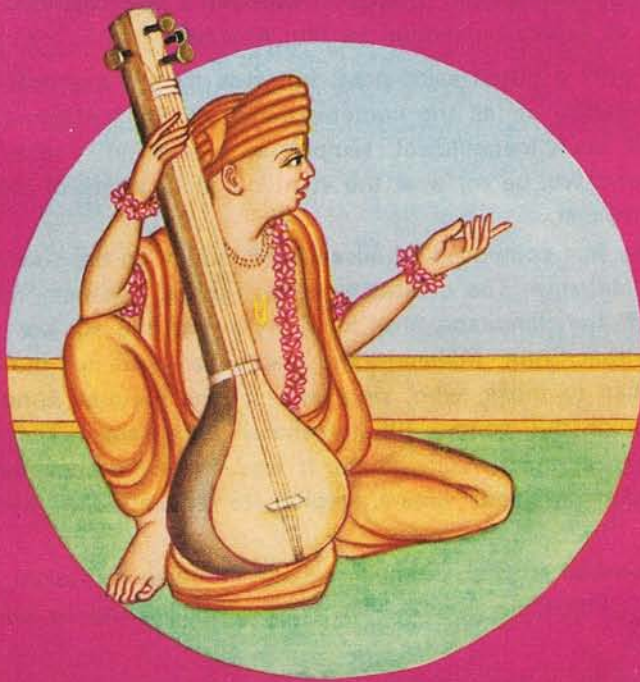
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BRAHMANAND SWAMI



**Edited
by
KANJI BHAGAT**

AN APPEAL

I have great pleasure in bringing out this book on the life history of Sadguru Shri Brahmananda Swami who was a great Saint Poet and a Contemporary devotee of Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan. The devotion of Swami Brahmananda to Shriji Maharaj deserves special mention because it was blended with a friendly affection as that of Arjuna's devotion to Shri Krishna.

He was not only a gifted saint poet, but was also a practical man in dealing with men and materials of all the contemporaries of Shriji Maharaj. He alone was fortunate to build such magnificent temples as we see in Vadtal, Junagadh and Muli, which are and will be for ever, the standing monuments of the architecture of Shri Swaminarayan sect.

As a poet, he has composed thousands of songs on the divine qualities and actions of Shriji Maharaj. The greatness of the songs lies not only on the poetic charm, beauty of the language, the lucid style and the subject dealt with, but also on the fact that Shriji Maharaj has granted a boon to the effect that, He would give Darshan to those, who sing atleast one hundred songs daily. Making His own remarks on the songs, Shriji Maharaj once said, "These are the songs which are always sung in Akshardham. It was Swami Brahmananda, who made the rulers of Saurashtra and Gujarat region to accept Shri Swaminarayan as God.

And, I am thankful to Shri Ubhaya Vedanta Vidwan K. Kasturi Rangacharyaji, Principal, Sanskrit Pathshala Vadtal, for rendering this English Version, based on the Gujarati script.

Finally, I appeal to all Satsangies to purchase and propagate this book containing colourful illustrations on many events connected with the life of Sadguru Swami Brahmananda.

Jai Swaminarayan

Gyan Baug
Vadtal - 387375

Kanji Bhagat

BRAHMANAND SWAMI

Mount Abu, the standing symbol of summer resort, in the northern border of Gujarat was revealing the golden touch received from the rays of the evening sun. Down below the mount, Khann, a small village was receiving a healing touch from the discourse of Sadguru Ramananda Swami.

The villagers assembled in a house, were hearing the religious discourse of Sadguru with rapt attention and devotion. He was describing the glorious divine qualities of Shri Krishna.

Laluba Devi, the pregnant lady of Sambhudan Gadhvi, the owner of that house was very much pleased by the discourse. Suddenly, a soft, shrill voice came from her womb. It asked Ramananda Swami, " Will you please tell me the glory of Shri Hari ?"

All were astonished to hear the voice. All eyes turned towards that direction. Glittering with a smile, Shri Ramananda said, " The child that lies in the womb of Laluba Devi is a divine person, who will become a great saint poet in future. He will spend his whole life in practising the nine ways of devotion to Shri Purushottam Narayan."

The parents were much delighted to hear his prophecy. Days passed on.

On the auspicious day of Vasant Panchmi, of the year Vikram Samvat 1828, Laluba Devi gave birth to a male child. At that time stream of glorious divine light spread over the surroundings. The villagers overwhelmed by the sight and came to the conclusion that the child was none other than a divine one.



People thronged that house to have a glimpse of the new born child. It's pleasing smile, charming beauty attracted every one. As he became the darling of the village people named him 'Ladudanji'.

Ladudanji, who hailed from the family of 'charans,' a community of minstrels, was intelligent, observant and started revealing his divine qualities even in the child-hood

Once he had been to his uncle's house, in the village Bhafli, very near to Kadana in Jodhpur district, along with his mother and uncle Amardanji (Laluba's brother). During their stay there, Laluba Devi used to lull the child in a cradle under a capparis spinosa tree.

One day she found to her sudden surprise, angels from the heaven paying floral tributes to the swinging child. They also sprinkled sandal powders and applied kum-kum on his forehead. The angels suddenly disappeared, when they saw Laluba Devi

But she was able to notice the kum-kum applied on the forehead of the child. She also saw the flowers showered and sandal powder sprinkled, all around the child. Even now one can see that tree being worshipped in the village Bhafli.

When Ladudanji was one year old, Laluba Devi returned to her village Khann with the child. Wherever Ladudanji went and whatever may be the number of visitors came to see him, there were no shortages of food or other things. People took him to their houses. Even there they were astonished to see this miracle.

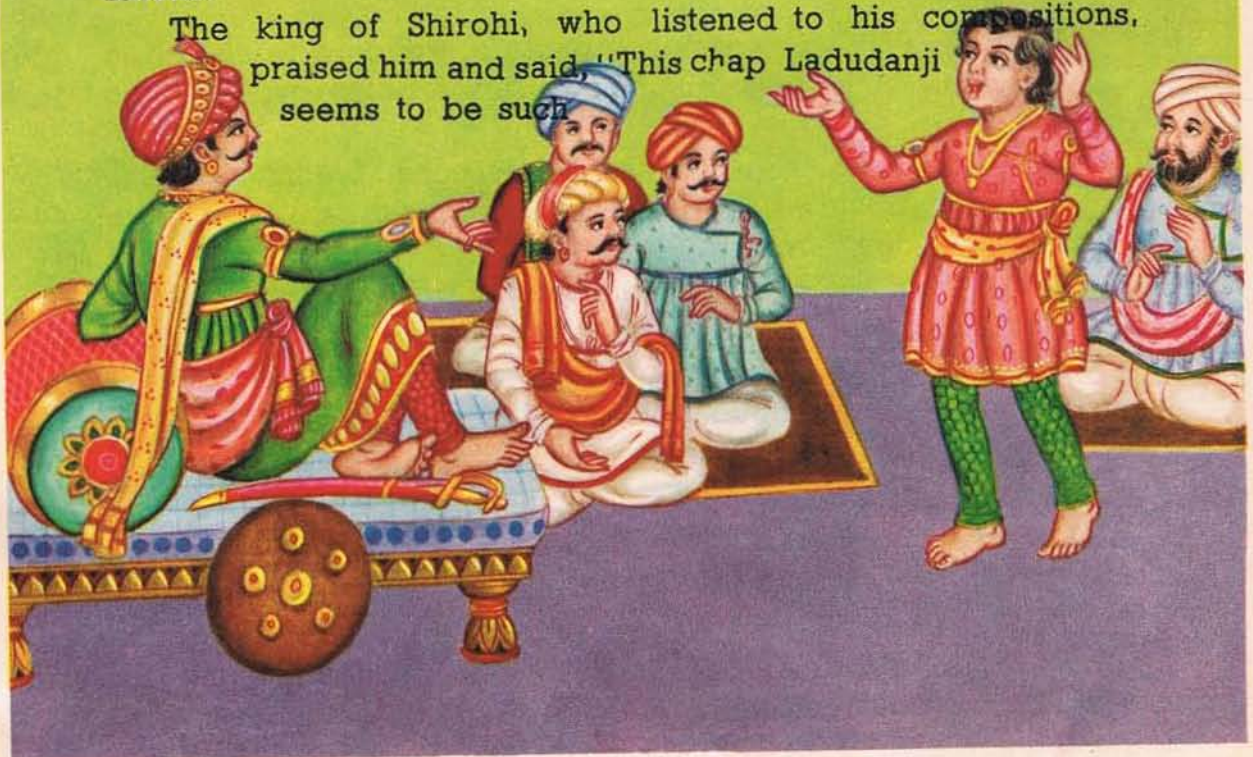
At the age of seven, Ladudanji started his studies under the able guidance of a Pandit named Shiv Shankar Upadhyaya.

Ladudanji's father, being a Poet Laureate at the Court of the King of Shirohi, other charan poets used to visit him often. They held discussions on composed poetries and presented several poems. As Ladudanji had a sharp memory power, he grasped the essence of those discussions and also used to present his own interesting poems within the circle of his friends.

It is said that Sarasvati Devi, the Goddess of Learning, dwells in the tongue of "Charans" (minstrel) since their birth and it is no wonder that Ladudanji had Her blessings.

Once there was a marriage function in the royal family of Shirohi. Ladudanji went with his father to attend the ceremony. There he delighted every one with some of his compositions.

The king of Shirohi, who listened to his compositions, praised him and said, "This chap Ladudanji seems to be such





a bright boy that one day he may become a royal poet. So he should be sent to Bhuj-Kutch for further studies at my own cost."

Still the problem before the parents was how to send him alone to Bhuj as he was too young. This problem worried the parents.

One night, much to their relief, Lord Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh appeared before them in the dream and said, "You people don't worry about the boy. A kutchi brahmin going to Kutch will call on you on the fifth day from today. Send your boy with him."

Exactly on the fifth day a kutchi brahmin Pandit arrived at the home of Sambhudan Gadhvi.

The parents received the brahmin warmly. After showing the due hospitality they discussed the problem with him. The brahmin said to them, "You have nothing to worry about the boy I will look after him very carefully.

Satisfied with his words, they made arrangements for the journey. Next day the parents gave the brahmin a horse and sufficient money for the expenses. The brahmin and Ladudanji started for Bhuj. Both of them rode on the horse in turns.

After fifteen days of journey they reached Bhuj. There Ladudanji had an audience with the Maharaja of Bhuj. His Highness was much pleased with the genius of Ladudanji, in composing poems at the too young age.

Ladudanji studied literature and prosody in Shri Lakhpat Vrajbhasha Pathshala in Bhuj and acquired a good knowledge of the literatures like Avtarcharitra and Praveen Sagar. He also mastered the art of Sahasravadhan (giving attention to thousand problems and solving them at a time) due to his sharp memory.

His voice was so melodious and powerful that it was heard throughout the town, whenever he used to sing loudly at night. At times Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan, in the guise of a merchant used to appear before him to provide him with money.



After completion of his studies at the age of twenty eight, the Maharaja of Bhuj presented him diamond jewels, gold ornaments and a sword.

The king also awarded Ladudanji, the titles of Raja Kavi Ratna, Pingal Vidyacharya, Sahasra Shatavadhani, Mahamahopadhyaya, and Mahashighra Kavishwar.

After awarding the titles, the king said to Ladudanji, " If you accept the post of poet Laureate in my court, I will give you all the lands of twelve villages as a gift."

As Ladudanji had other plans, he did not accept the offer. He desired to travel far and wide to meet other scholars and poets. Before beginning his tour, he offered considerable sum of money and other valuables to his teacher and Abhayadanji, the royal poet of Bhuj.

Ladudanji, proceeded first, towards Dhamadka. On reaching Dhamadka, he came into contact with Vijay Kushaldasji Maharaj, a great scholar. After meeting him, Ladudanji felt that art is long and life is short. He made up his mind to study more.

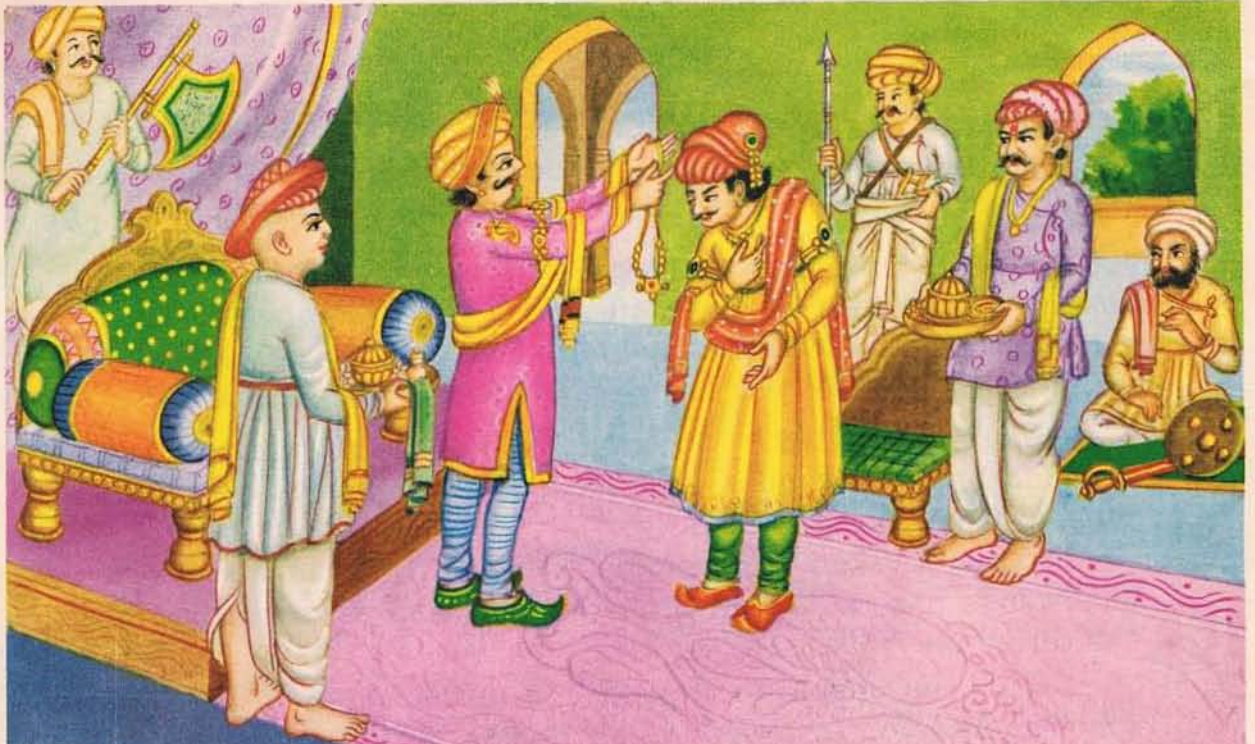
He said to himself, " I have never seen such a scholar. So far I have seen only a part of the ocean. Vijaykushaldasji Maharaj is the ocean of knowledge. So I should study under this gentleman, who has done his course at Varanasi."

Thus, Ladudanji decided to stay with him.

From Vijaykushaldasji, Ladudanji learned to play musical instruments like Sitar and Tabla and received the title "Sangeetacharya. " He also mastered Sanskrit and works in Sanskrit like, Sukra Neeti, Vidura Neeti, Chanakya Neeti etc. Besides these, he also learned twenty four varieties of arts that could be useful to him among the sixty four varieties of arts.

When Ladudanji took leave of his teacher, Vijaykushaldasji, said,

" My son, remember this ! If at all there is any art which is supreme, then it is the art of concentrating one's mind towards God. Very soon, by grace of God, you will come into contact with a great **divine god-like guru.**"



Then he went to Jamnagar. He won the hearts of the royal couple of Jamnagar within eight months.

When the king of Jamnagar requested Ladudanji, to be his poet Laureate he politely refused saying that the poets are an independent lot. After turning down the offer, Ladudanji, proceeded further. He visited Gondal, Dhoraji and received royal welcome and gifts. Later he reached Junagadh.

Nawab of Junagadh, summoned the royal assembly to honour Ladudanji. At the assembly, Ladudanji thrilled the audience with his song lining the essence of Kuran. The whole assembly bowed that eminent poet.

While Ladudanji stayed at Junagadh at the request of the Nawab, he taught his son Bahadurkhan the art of playing Tabla. From there he went on pilgrimage to Somnath, mounted the circular peak, toured across Palitana and reached Bhavnagar.

Vajesinh, the Maharaja of Bhavnagar, gave him a warm welcome and made all arrangements for his stay there. At the court of the king, Ladudanji sung songs in praise of the rich heritage of suryavamsa and the achievements of their forefathers. Maharaja Vajesinh worshipped him in the court.

The Maharaja liked Ladudanji to be the poet Laureate of his court. He desired to adorn Ladudanji with golden ornaments. Hence he called for the goldsmith to take measurements.

The goldsmith, who came to Ladudanji, had a vertical 'U' shaped tilak on his forehead and a red dot of kum-kum within. On seeing his tilak Ladudanji asked eagerly, "Goldsmith, which sect, the tilak you have on the forehead belongs to?"

Goldsmith replied, "Sir, this belongs to the sampradaya founded by Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan who Himself is Purushottama, from Akshar Dham."

Ladudanji asked surprisingly, "What? Is Swaminarayan a Bhagwan? Has He the qualities of Bhagwan as described in the scriptures?"

"Sir, I am unable to explain you further more. It is up to scholars like you to examine and decide."

"Yes, you are correct goldsmith - we, the people of charan community do not love or show devotion to any one who is not the real God." - said Ladudanji.

Goldsmith said, "Yes. I do agree. We goldsmiths too, do not accept gold without putting it to acid test. Now the way is open. Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan is now staying at Gadhada. You can test Him."

King Vajesinh, who was listening to the conversation agreed with the view and said, "The popularity of Swaminarayan Bhagwan is growing day by day in my State. So, Kaviraj, you please go to Gadhada and find out the fact, whether, Swaminarayan is really a God or not."

All arrangements were made for the trip. Sending him off, the goldsmith uttered, "Kaviraj, river may join the ocean. But can it ever measure the depth?"

Ladudanji replied, "Only after testing, it can be ascertained whether it is gold or not."

At that time Amardanji, the uncle of Ladudanji arrived there and joined him in his journey.

On the way Ladudanji made up his mind to test Swaminarayan Bhagwan with the following four criteria.

He said to himself.

- (1) " If Swaminarayan, is really a God, he should narrate my life from the birth till to day. "
- (2) " He should show me, on his own accord, the lines of the sixteen divine symbols formed in the soles of his feet. "
- (3) " He should present me a garland of roses, worn by him, which is a rare thing in this season. "
- (4) " He should be seated facing the east and read Bhagvatam, which is placed on a black blanket. "

When he reached Gadhada, he experienced such a peace of mind which he did not expect. He stopped a while and asked a passer by.

" Brother, I heard that God is residing here. Can you tell me where I can meet Him ? "

That passenger directed him to the right place and said, " Now He will be available at the assembly of Ebhal Khatcher. " Ladudanji went to the Durbar of the king and was astounded to see the scene there. At once all his emotional thoughts rushed out from his mouth, in the form of a poem :

Four may come, Sixty four may bloom.

Twenty may stand as folded before,

That one which touches the hearts of souls
is equal to a group of Seven Crore.

To his surprise, Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan was seated facing towards the east on a quilt bedstead under a Neem tree. He was also adorned with a garland of roses. In front of Him, was placed the holy book of Bhagavat Purana on a black blanket.

Ebhal Khatcher received Ladudanji and provided accommodation for his group. Later he took them to Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan.

When Ebhal Khatcher was about to introduce him to Shri Swaminarayan, Shri Bhagwan Himself, said to Ebhal Khatcher



smilingly, Ladudanji has come here from Bhavnagar. Provide accommodation for him and also for his group and look after the horses.

Then Shri Swaminarayan asked Muktananda Swami, His disciple standing nearby, to spread a carpet besides His seat. He got down from His seat, embraced Ladudanji with great affection and garlanded him with the same garland of roses which Bhagwan was adorning.

Then Bhagwan sat with Ladudanji on the newly spread carpet and started the conversation.

"Do you remember?" the Bhagwan asked the poet, "Your journey to Bhuj and the Brahmin accompanied you? And do you remember that Bania who helped you at Bhuj?"

"Yes," replied the poet



" It was myself, " revealing the secret Bhagwan said, " In the guise of the Brahmin and the Bania that came to help you."

Shri Bhagwan then narrated the story of poet's life from beginning to the date without leaving even a minor incident. In the course of his narration he disclosed even those facts, which Ladudanji alone knew.

When Ladudanji was astonished to hear his own story, Shri Bhagwan seated on His cushion showed His feet and asked the poet to see them. The poet looked at the feet and to his astonishment saw the lines of sixteen divine symbols, as he expected of the God to be.

When Ladudanji was starring at the feet, they touched his chest. Suddenly a divine light pervaded into his heart and the poet expressed his feelings in the poems.

The meaning of the poem runs thus :-

' This day is a fortunate day and this occasion is a blessed one. As I have Darshan of Shri Sahajananda. To day I Ladu, met the guru as to my liking, who opened the lock of my knowledge with the key in his look.'

As soon as he uttered the last line of the poem, he got into transcendental meditation (Samadhi). In his Samadhi Ladudanji saw that almighty Shri Purushottam Narayan is Shri Swaminarayan. He also saw in the aura of Shri Bhagwan all the ten incarnations.

After he woke up from his samadhi, he composed poems on his transcendental experience and (narrated), read them before Shri Bhagwan.

After taking food all of them went to their retiring rooms. During this time Ladudanji was deeply thinking over the divine glimpses he had experienced.

He composed a poetry on the divine sports of God in His incarnations. In the evening, Becharji Chawda called on him and brought him to the assembly.

Shri Bhagwan received him with honour, got him seated near His seat and said, " Kaviraj you read the poetry which you composed at noon, before the audience."

Ladudanji was reading the poem describing the Avatars, one after another in order. In the same order the Avatars also appeared from and disappeared into the body of Shri Swaminarayan one after another. The appearance and disappearance was simultaneous with the reading of poems on the respective Avatars. Every one in the assembly had a glimpse of this miracle with astonishment.

"Kaviraj" Shri Bhagwan said after congratulating him with garlands. "You have recognised and described me as what I am really."

Shri Bhagwan then, gave a boon to Ladudanji according to which any one who repeats daily, the poem composed by Ladudanji on Dasavatars, can attain the Knowledge to understand that Swaminarayan is really the all mighty God.

During that night, the event of the day came before him again and again. So he went late to bed.

On the next morning, as soon as he got up from his bed, Ladudanji wrote a letter to the Maharaja of Bhavnagar. In that letter he asked the Maharaja to send all his articles and the horse to his father.

In an another letter addressed to his father he wrote, "As I have determined to keep life long celibacy and devote my life to serve Shri Swaminarayan, I am not in a position to compose poems in praise of mortal men, as one cannot chew the charcoal after testing the essence of beatal leaves. Also please inform this news to His Highness Shri Gaikwad."

He handed over both the letters to his uncle and instructed him to take the letters to Maharaja of Bhavnagar. The Maharaja was requested to hand over the other letter to Ladudanji's father.

In the letter to the Maharaja of Bhavnagar, Ladudanji wrote all his experiences with Shri Swaminarayan and also his conclusion that Shri Swaminarayan is really a Bhagwan. He also informed his decision to spend the rest of his life in service of Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan.

Amardanji, the uncle of the poet went to Bhavnagar and



handed over the letters to the Maharaja. Maharaja after reading the letter repented for his act of sending Ladudanji to Shri Swaminarayan. In his attempt to test Bhagwan, he has lost a Jem like Ladudanji. The Jem once lost is lost for ever and no use of feeling regret over it.

The Maharaja handed over all valuables of Ladudanji to his uncle and also sent some valuable ornaments, articles to Ladudanji and requested him through a messenger to accept them. Ladudanji accepted them with hesitation, thinking that refusal to accept them will wound the feelings of the Maharaja.

Ladudanji, then wrote a letter to him, with a request to visit Gadhada to have the darshan of Swaminarayan. Some landlords of Bhavnagar, who visited Gadhada, wrote letters to their relatives inviting them to witness the performance of Shatavadhan by Ladudanji in a public assembly. Many people were assembled in the place.

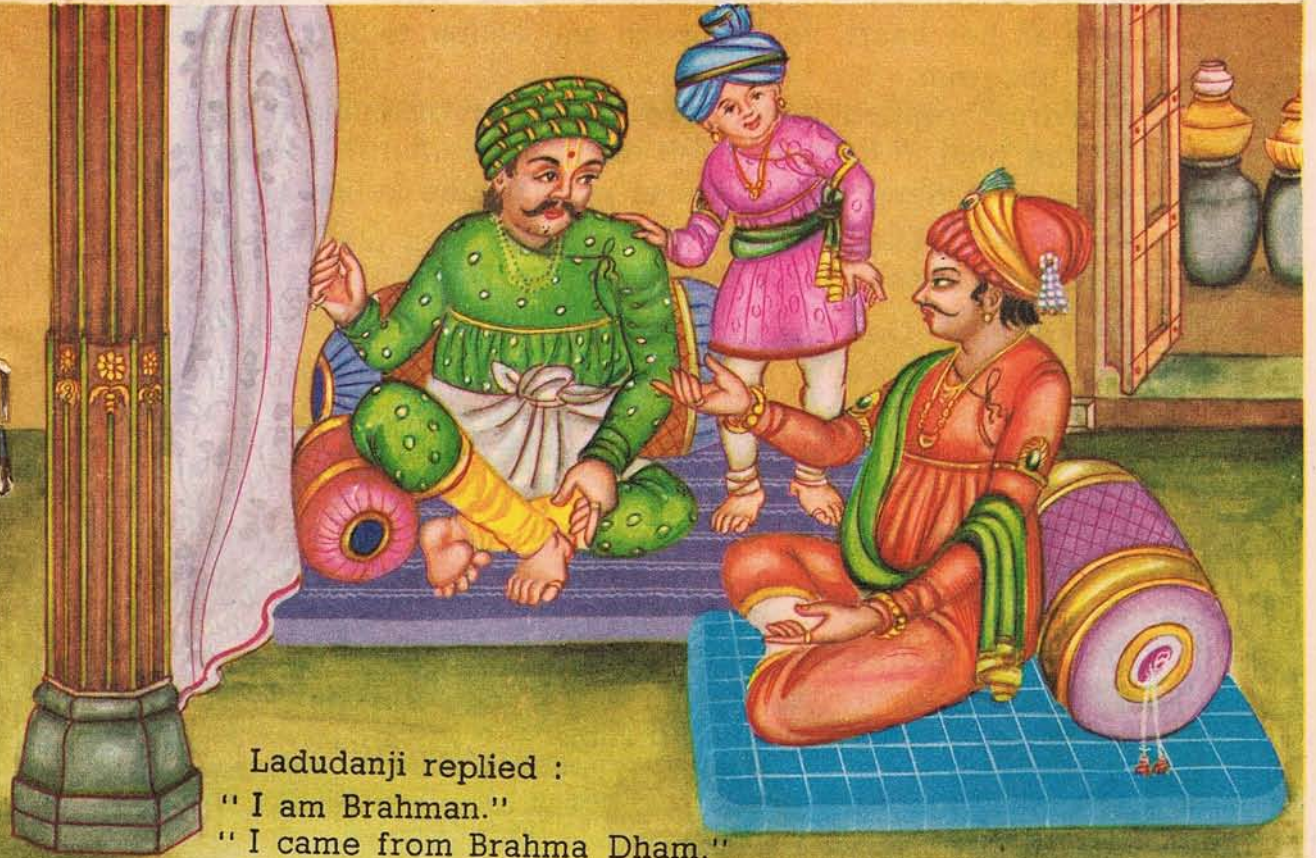
In the gathering three questions were put to Ladudanji.

"Who are you?"

"Where did you come from?"

"Where do you want to go to?"

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Ladudanji replied :

" I am Brahman."

" I came from Brahma Dham."

" I am going to Brahma Dham."

Ebhal Khatcher's daughters namely Jeevuba, Laduba, Nariuba and Panchuba were averse to marriage. He was much annoyed with their aversion. So he requested Shri Bhagwan to help him in this regard. In response, Shri Bhagwan asked Ladudanji to persuade the girls to marry. Ladudanji was self-confident as he relied upon his own intelligence and tact. He had his own personality on the one hand and valuable ornaments on the other which were both very effective.

Ladudanji went to the Darbar gadh. On the way, he thought that females are naturally fond of praise. So let me compose some poems in praise of ladies.

He narrated :

" Gems are the ladies and ever new, who can do anything and everything.

In this universe, none can give pleasure. But the ladies.

In this type he composed several songs in praise of ladies. But for Jeevuba, she was a hard nut to crack. She had deter-

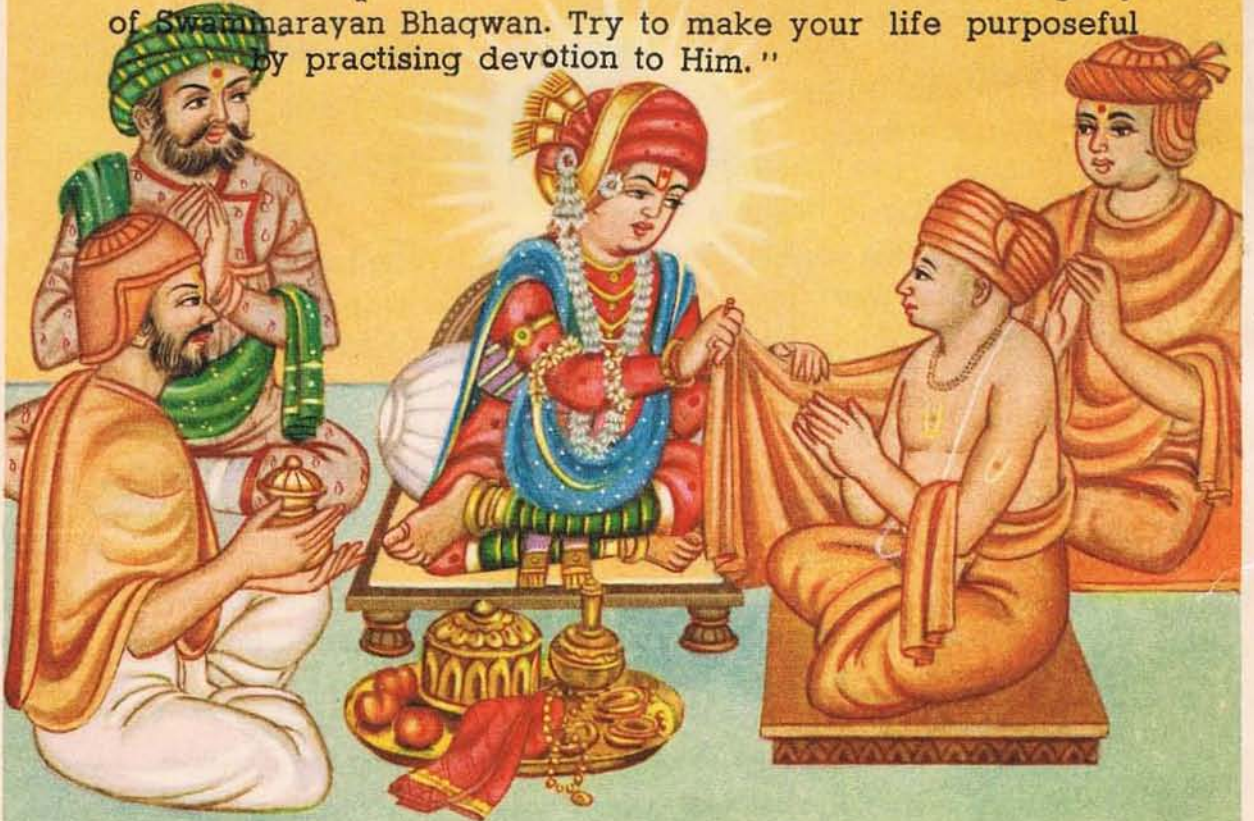
mined like a pativratta (virtuous dedicated wife) to devote her with all her heart, soul, speech and action, to Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan.

"Kaviraj" replied Jeevuba politely, after listening attentively to the poet, "Have you left anything to utter? You have exhibited your deep knowledge in praising the ladies.

We and Shri Bhagwan both would have been pleased, had your knowledge been used in praising Shri Swaminarayan."

She added, "God blessed us with a tongue to praise His own divine qualities and blessed with ears to hear His divine qualities. Both our tongue and ears have been misused. This human body is a mortal one. No purpose would be served in the end, by repeating the praises (flattering words). Finally, the love, the devotion to God alone will serve our purpose. Therefore, you give up all show of pomp; give up this ornaments of gold, jewels and valuables.

And know yourself as 'Brahman' and understand the glory of Swaminarayan Bhagwan. Try to make your life purposeful by practising devotion to Him."



Speed, only needs a flick gentle push to accelerate. Ladudanji went direct to Shri Swaminarayan. He was as much humiliated as "Uddhavji," who went to Gopies to teach, but was taught by them and returned humiliated.

Ladudanji, now decided, that he should take initiation from Shri Bhagwan. He approached Shri Bhagwan and requested to bless him with initiation. He surrendered all his belongings, diamonds, jewels etc. to Shri Bhagwan.

Shri Bhagwan gave him initiation with His own hands and christened him as Shri Rangadasji. As Shri Bhagwan looked at him with blessings, some divine light spread around Ladudanji and entered into his body and disappeared. The function of initiation took place in the year of Samvat 1861.

One morning Shri Rangadasji was seated in the verandah, out side his room, singing some devotional songs and was absorbed in the meditation closing his eyes. In the mean-time Shri Sadguru Muktananda Swami also came there and sat in meditation. Shri Swaminarayan impressed by the songs, came there.

At the end, Shri Bhagwan touched the head of the poet and exclaimed, "Oh, 'Brahmananda' You are now drowned in the intoxication of Brahman."

Hearing the word 'Brahmananda' Shri Rangadasji said, "Bhagwan, I like this name, 'Brahmananda'. The name 'Shri Rangadas' does not suit to the poems."

Shri Bhagwan approved this suggestion. Thus, once Ladudanji, now Shri Rangadasji, became "**Brahmananda**" afterwards.

In the mean-time, the letter written by Brahmananda Swami reached his parents. It was great shock to them as well as to their relatives as if they were drowned in a deep sea.

Already the poet was engaged to a girl Khimbai by name. The party on girl's side was also overcome with grief. Both the parties came to Gadhada, to dissuade him from renouncing the worldly life.

When Swami Brahmananda, heard about the arrival of his

relatives, he did not come out from his cell to meet them. They all went to Shri Swaminarayan and prayed Him, " Please, let us meet Ladudanji at least once. We will explain him to take ordinary social life. "

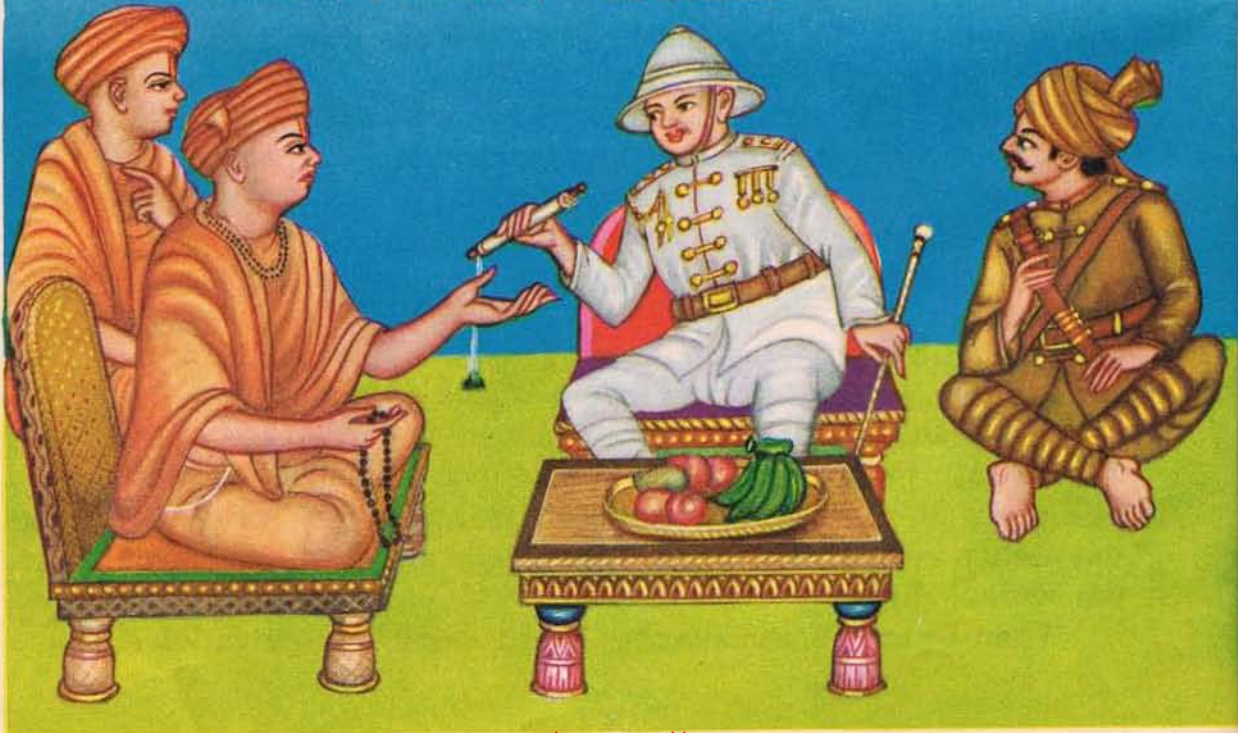
The Bhagwan smiled within Himself as He was already aware how strong Swami Brahmananda's detachment from the worldly pleasure was !

At the behest of Shri Swaminarayan, Swami Brahmananda came to the assembly. His relatives requested him to return to their ordinary social fold. Swami Brahmananda, turned down their request, in his own style, in a song. The song sounds thus :

" Engagement to Him, alone is immortal !
All others are nothing but mortal ! "

Similarly, when the Maharaja of Baroda, Gaikwad, offered the post of Poet Laureate in his Court, along with a Jagir of 25 villages, he sarcastically rejected the offer saying :

" As a piper in the Court of the King
I sang many a time " Your Highness "
Gone are those days calling " Your Majesty " to his liking
For none I sing on God and " His Greatness. "



Later, when Swami Brahmananda came to Ahmedabad, he came into contact with the General Gorden Saheb. The Saheb was well conversant with Hindi as he had been living in India for many years.

Sadguru Brahmananda was teaching him Hindi literature.

Once, the horse of the Gorden Saheb fell ill. Even after a prolonged course of treatment, the horse did not recover. When this came to the notice of Swami Brahmananda, he prescribed a medicine for the treatment. By the application of that medicine, the horse was cured.

When the Saheb, out of curiosity, asked Swami about the medicine, Brahmananda presented him with a copy of a book written by Sage Shalihotra on "the treatment and diseases of the horse" Further, the Swami taught him many features related to horses.

Pleased with Swami's help, Gorden Saheb, in return, helped Brahmananda in acquiring a piece of land in Ahmedabad and also got him permission from the East India Company to construct a temple on it. Thus came, the Nar-Narayan temple at Ahmedabad.

Later, Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan decided to build a temple in Vadtal. To test the ability of Swami Brahmananda he asked him to build a temple as small as a Hanumanji temple. But Swami Brahmananda thought, "will it be a fitting monument to Shriji Maharaj to build such a small temple as that of a Hanuman Mandir?"

Swami Brahmananda came to Vadtal. There, he met the rich land-lords and put his proposal before them. All of them approved and exclaimed in one voice. "This is a matter of pride and prestige to the people of charotar"

From Gadhada Shri Bhagwan sent a message in verse form.

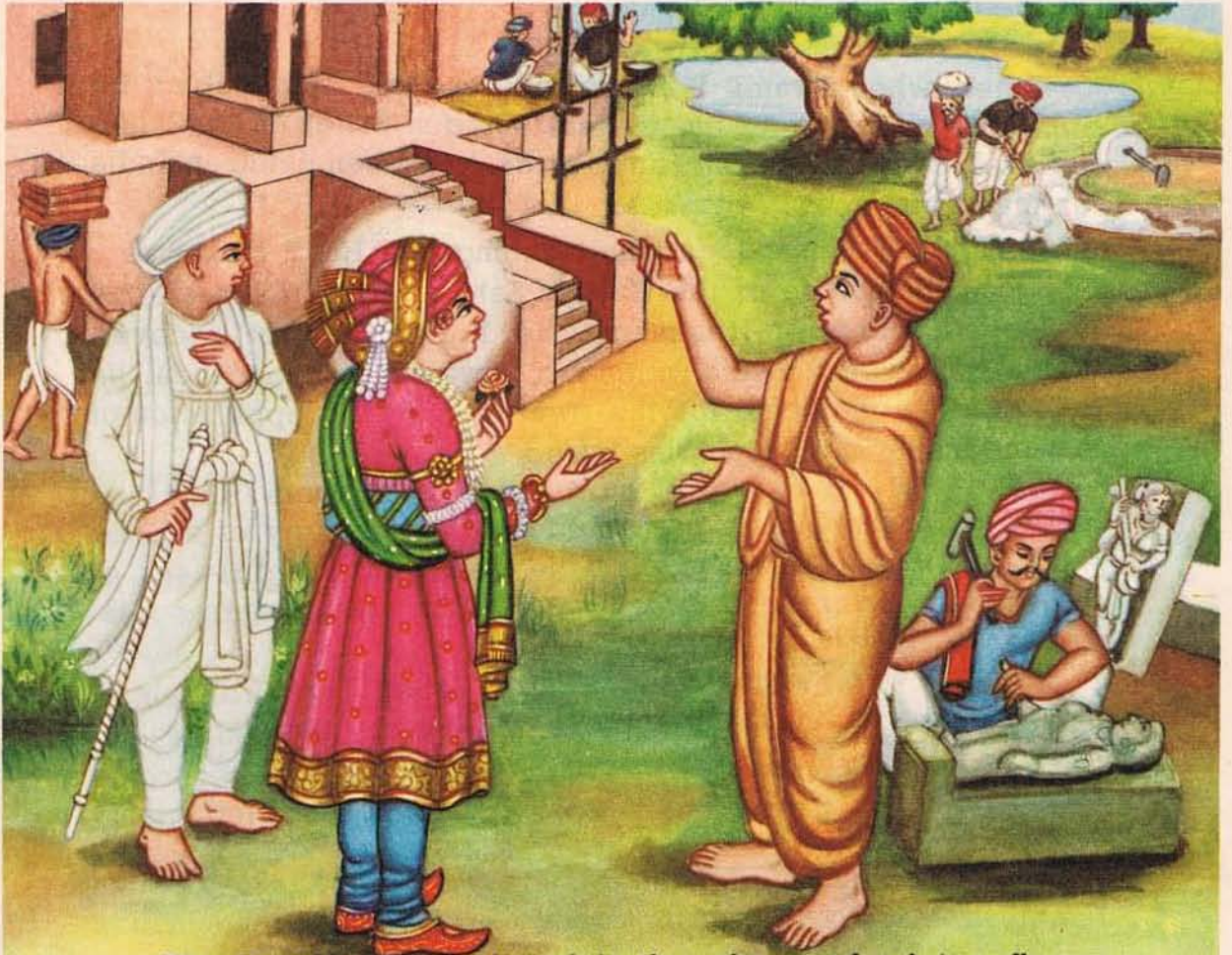
"Think over your limit Step forward in it.

Stretch your feet according to the sheet"

In reply Swami Brahmananda wrote :

Rich are there to lend a hand In right earnest with all one's heart

When grace of God prevails abound Work will move with a good start.



The temple was designed in the shape of a lotus flower with three main towers. The work for laying foundation was started. Along with that so many problems started creeping in. But with the blessings of Shri Swaminarayan all of them faded away.

The site for the proposed temple was a grove. So the temple can not be constructed without removing the trees. According to the Shastras and Puranas, cutting of the trees is a cruel sin. Hence, Sadguru Brahmananda was hesitant to cut the trees. Having known the fact Shri Bhagwan said to him, "You shall not bother about this issue. All the souls (Jeevas) residing in these trees will become Sat-Sanghis in their next birth and will go to Akshardham direct."

Under the able guidance of Swami Brahmananda, the construction of the temple was going on very Speedily.

So pleased was Shri Bhagwan, that in the presence of all

Sadhus and devotees, placed on Sadguru Brahmanand's head, a floral crown, which Shri Bhagwan was adorning. He also took out a garland from His neck and garlanded Swami Brahmananda. He also honoured him with his prasadee.

Thereafter, Swami Brahmananda went to Gadhada and began his work of songs on Shri Bhagwan. He composed 2600 songs, full of devotion coupled with emotion.

Shri Swaminarayan granted a boon to the effect that, He would give Darshan to those who sing atleast one hundred songs daily. Through another boon He granted was that the person who meditate upon the Murty of Shri Bhagwan through these songs, can become a poet like Brahmananda.

Swami Brahmananda composed the songs in about fiftyfour varieties of Ragas and about twenty seven varieties of matra (chhand). Besides these songs, he wrote many books on Bhakti and Religion such as :

Upadesa Ratna Deepika, Shiksha Patree (Gujarati Songs), Upadesa Chintamani Neeti Prakash (Hindi), Dharma Vamsaprakash, Sampradaya Pradeep, Sumati Prakash Shiksha Patree (Hindi), Viveka Chintamani, Dharma Siddhanta, Vartamana Vivek Chanda Ratnavali, Brahma Vilas, Narayana Geeta, Satee Geeta.



These works are composed in such a simple and easy style, and so full of emotion that any one can easily learn them by heart.

Jhina Bhai, a staunch devotee of Shri Swaminarayan decided to build a temple in Junagadh. The site for the temple, owned by Jhina Bhai was in the thickly populated town area. People opposed (the construction) and also placed so many hurdles on its construction. Besides this, octroi duties were levied on the materials brought for construction.

To solve this problem, Shri Bhagwan, sent Brahmananda Swami to Junagadh. At that time Bahadoor Khan was the Nawab of Junagadh, whom Swami Brahmananda once taught music and tabla.

Brahmananda Swami called on the Nawab. The Nawab recognised his guru and honoured him. Swami Brahmananda asked the Nawab to exempt the materials brought for the construction of the temple from octroi duty. The Nawab responded indirectly and ordered the exemption.

When the Swami was staying in Junagadh, he wanted that Shri Bhagwan should be invited to Junagadh and brought in a procession on a horse. So he asked for a good horse. The people, who were averse to Swami Brahmananda because of his influence on the Nawab, wanted to degrade him. So they gave him a horse, who has out of control due to his sexual urge. A horse impudent with the sexual urge can never be controlled even by a horse expert. People expected that before the horse Swami Brahmananda will be humiliated. But Swami Brahmananda approved the horse with courage and murmured in his ear, the mantra written in Salihotra Muni's book. To the surprise of the spectators the horse turned polite and came under control.

Time acts upon human body arbitrarily and weakens it gradually and reminds every one of the bitter fact that youth is diminishing day by day. Especially at the fag end of the life, the thought itself gives gitters to the persons. Swami Brahmananda also had to face such a situation.



In the year, of Samvat 1876 Swami Brahmananda fell seriously ill. No one was aware of the fact that how many purposeful years he had spent in obeisance to his Master. People thought he may not recover. Shri Bhagwan asked each devotee to give up a span of their life in favour of Swami Brahmananda. All of them responded. Shri Bhagwan then touched upon the head of Swami Brahmananda and told the devotees that the span of his life was extended.

Accordingly, within three days Swami Brahmananda recovered completely. He went before Shri Bhagwan and sang a song.

" Don't stop me, " O " my lord ! Sahajanand, my dear God !

I have more work in thy HOME. Let me go to " Akshar Dham."

Hearing his song, Shri Bhagwan remarked, " You taunt me as much as you can. But you should not give up your life "

Later Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan sent Swami Brahmananda to Surat, to study "Siddhanta Caumudi" under Muni Baba, a great scholar. Apart from Siddhanta Caumudi, Brahmananda learnt Tharka Shastra and other Sanskrit literature. As he had a sharp memory, he completed the course within a short period and returned to Gadhadra.

Once, when he was staying at the Village Koth, Swami Brahmananda received a letter from Swaminarayan. In that letter Shri Bhagwan asked him to go to Jetalpur and make a deep study of Tharka Shastra. He did so accordingly.

When Shri Swaminarayan was camping at village Adaraj, He conferred on Shri Brahmananda the title of 'SADGURU' and appointed him as the chief propagator of Sat-Dharma (Religion).

The other recipients of the same title at the same time were Swami Nityananda, Swami Muktananda and Swami Chaitanyananda.

Sadguru Brahmananda Swami was considered as the mother of saints, as he used to take care of other saints with motherly affection.

Once Shri Bhagwan ordered all the saints to eschew the tasty foods and fat contents. He asked them to live on the bread prepared in stale Juwar only. As a result due to lack of nutritious food all the saints became weak and nyctalopic.

Sadguru Brahmananda was much moved by the plight of the saints. But the question was, how to inform this to Shri Bhagwan. Suddenly, an idea struck him.

Once there was a festival in Karyani. At night Swami Brahmananda asked the saints one by one, to bring his sitar for a recital. But no one moved from his seat. Shri Bhagwan, who was witnessing this enquired the reason. Brahmananda took this opportunity and informed Shri Bhagwan that due to lack of nutritious food, they have become night blind. Immediately Shri Bhagwan ordered that thereafter all the saints should be served nutritious food. This incident shows how Swami Brahmananda was a well wisher of saints.

In the year of 1886 Samvat, Shri Bhagwan Swaminarayan decided to go back to His abode "Akshar Dham." But He thought that if Brahmananda will remain here then it would be very difficult. So He resolved to send Swami Brahmananda away from Him any how.

Just as fulfilling his wish, Shri Bhagwan received a letter from Gunatitananda Swami at Junagadh. The letter requested Shri Bhagwan to send Brahmananda Swami immediately to solve the problems in the construction of the temple. Shri Bhagwan who was ailing, ordered Swami Brahmananda to proceed to Junagadh.

Swami Brahmananda took leave of Shri Bhagwan with a heavy heart foreseeing some undesirable event. While he was supervising the work in the corridor around the temple, Bhaguji Bhagat, came from Gadhada and broke the heart by the news that **Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan went back to His abode Akshar Dham.**

"Stop," ordered Brahmananda to the mason, Ratna. "Stop the work. Don't plaster the stones."

Then he lamented, "The hypocrite has played the 'hypocrisy'."

Immediately Sadguru Brahmananda left for Gadhada on a camel. When he reached Gadhada, he saw to his grief that the cremation ceremony had been completed.

"Oh" he cried, "If you people would have kept the body till my arrival, I would have brought it to life."

But as every one knows, a body burnt to ashes would not come back to life. It is futile to lament over the death. So Gopalananda Swami consoling Swami Brahmananda stated that Shri Bhagwan would be ever present with His astral body as He is omnipresent.

Then Swami Brahmananda went straight to the temple of Shri Gopinathji and sang a song expressing the inner cry of his distress :

"O dear my soul ! Please come back !

Can not bear this grief, my heart will break !



At that time, he saw a divine miracle. Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan appeared from the icon of Shri Gopinathji before the audience embraced with affection, garlanded him and disappeared in the same icon.

As a result, Swami Brahmananda realised that Shri Bhagwan always lives with him. Later Brahmananda Swami attended to his duties to be completed. He experienced in his heart the divine form of Shri Bhagwan and spent his time in songs of devotion. Whenever he experienced the grief caused by the separation of Shri Bhagwan, he meditated Him in his heart fully absorbed in Him.

Shri Bhagwan went to His abode 'Akshar Dham' on the tenth day of the bright day of Jeshta month, in the year of Samvat 1886. After this, Swami Brahmananda wrote songs, in thousands expressing his grief. In these elegiac songs, he described the divine acts of Shri Bhagwan as well as the grief that struck the hearts of His devotees. These songs are so emotional that they would melt even the stones.

In some songs Swami Brahmananda describes some of the past events bringing them back to memory such as :

Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan some times goes through the lanes and bylanes riding on a horse, wearing a turban in to a crestonit. Sometimes speaking sweet talks, othertimes serving food to all His devotees and distributing clothes to the needy.

In a song, he expresses his grief caused by the demise of Shri Bhagwan :

" Grief of Thy separation burns in my heart
And blows from outside like waves of heat
Without meeting you O my love so bright
All the world would turn into night
Once you made me love Thy self
Hence you don't go leaving away my self.

Shri Bhagwan intended to built a temple at Muli Shri Ayodhyaprasadji, the Acharya of Ahmedabad Peeth brought it to the notice of Brahmananda Swami. He also handed over to Sadguru, a copper plate document written by the Durbars.

of Muli in connection with the purchase of land for the purpose. The wife of Shri Acharya handed over to Brahmananda Swami a box full of jewels to meet the expenses.

The foundation work for the temple was started. There was an error in the plan for which no one could give a thought. The path way surrounding the temple was very narrow, on the southern side. Shri Bhagwan appeared before Brahmananda Swami in his dream. He pointed out to Swami Brahmananda the error and suggested corrections. The next morning Swami Brahmananda called for the mason to make corrections accordingly.

The stones for the building were to be brought from Dhrangadhra. The house holders there hesitated to help. Swami Brahmananda didn't give up the effort, for he is not a man to lose heart in times of difficulties. On that night Sadguru Brahmananda took his Tambura and pleased the Bhagwan with his songs and appealed to Him for help. Shri Bhagwan, again came before him in the dream and brought him to a place miles away from Muli. Seated on horse, He threw a stone over a bush and asked Brahmananda Swami to collect sufficient white stone from that place.

Next morning Swami Brahmananda found out that place and to his surprise saw a mine of white stones. Again he faced another difficulty. No water was available near the place.

Whenever Shri Bhagwan wants to test His devotees, He would create problems and again Swami Brahmananda requested for His help. Shri Swaminarayan appeared in the guise of a shepherd and showed him a well covered with shrubs and trees, went away to northern side and disappeared.

After the demise of Shri Bhagwan Swami Brahmananda and other saints considered Swami Shri Gopalananda as the representative of Shri Bhagwan. So Swami Brahmananda requested Swami Gopalananda to visit Muli temple for the installation of Idol in the temple. Accepting the invitation Shri Gopalananda Swami, a too old to withstand the journey and already ailing, rode on a horse to Muli.

Once in Muli, all the standing crops were withering due to draught. Some devotees asked Swami Brahmananda, to bring rain for the crops. Swami asked the devotees to feed the saints, in return. They agreed and Shri Brahmananda Swami took his 'Tambura' and sang the Raga Malhar. Within an hour there was a heavy rain. Thus the crops were saved.

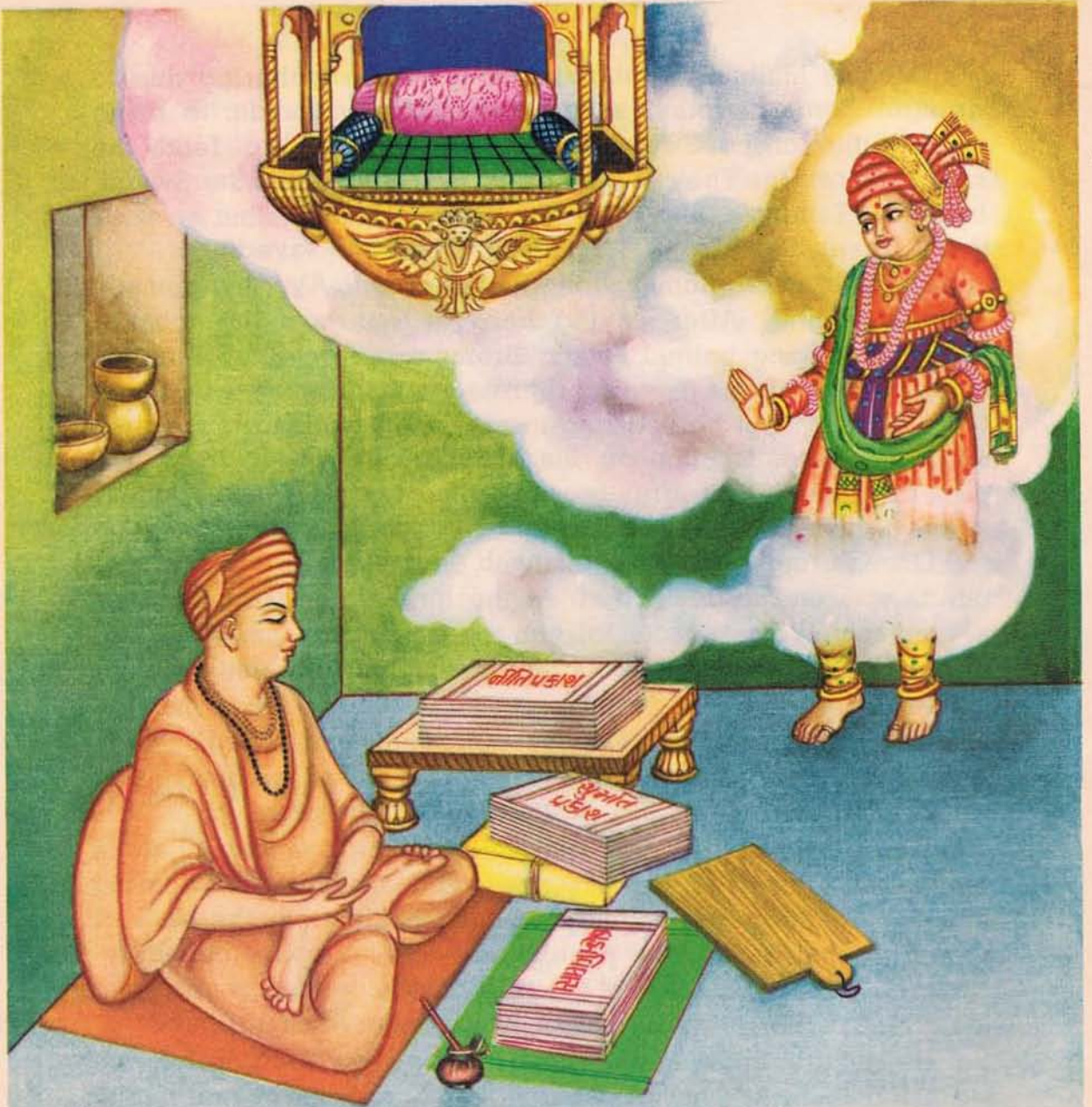
Once Swami Brahmananda went along with Ayodhyaprasadji Maharaj to Bhuj. After staying there for four days, the Acharya returned leaving behind Swami Brahmananda at Bhuj. Brahmananda Swami after a few days returned to Muli. In the way he got tired. A merchant helped him in crossing the desert (the raan of Kutch) beseating him on his bullock cart. The bullock was also tired and died after crossing the desert. Swami Brahmananda rescued the animal from the bondage of next birth.

Once, a merchant and a staunch devotee of Swami Brahmananda was on his death bed. At the time of his death, four servants of 'Yama' came to him to take away his life. The merchant, at that time, meditated upon Sadguru Swami Brahmananda. All the servants of Yama, ran away in a hurry that the window panes were broken to pieces. Swami Brahmananda was such a holy man, that the remembrance to whom also can bring a man near Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan.

When Swami Brahmananda was sixty, he was staying at the temple in Muli. He foresaw the end of his life nearing him. But death does not come without a pretext. In the case of Swami Brahmananda, the pretext was a small boil on his back. Now, he fully realised that the time has come to live at the lotus feet of Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan at Akshar Dham.

He did not show any sign of pain even though he was suffering from it. Dharma Dhurandhar Shri Acharya met him at this time. Swami said to Acharya "Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan has called me to His abode. Please, you don't feel bereaved."

Sadguru Swami Shri Brahmananda, then offered Pooja to Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan and was absorbed in the meditation. Stream of divine light spread over the room. Bhagwan Shri Swaminarayan Himself appeared in the room, took Swami



Brahmananda with Him to His abode Akshar Dham.

It was at noon on the tenth day of bright half of Jyestha month in Samvat 1888. Sadguru Śwami Brahmananda thus, lived in this world for 60 years, five months and five days.



**Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan Kala Kendra Trust
Gyan Bag, Vadtal - 387375.**